MR. V. MADHAVAN: May I know the approximate time within which the work could be finished?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: As quickly as possible the work will be done. But I have ceased to give promises in Travancore so far as a work is concerned.

SAHIB BAHADUR K. A. MAHOMED: May I know who is responsible for sending such faulty estimates?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Half a dozen Executive Engineers have been there.

SAHIB BAHADUR K. A. MAHOMED: May I know who is that officer responsible for this kind of faulty work?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: The matter is pending enquiry. But all the same I am insisting on my officers doing the job allotted to them.

SAHIB BAHADUR K. A. MAHOMED: Does the member realise that because of the fault of his officers in not doing their jobs properly, the public have to suffer a great deal?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: There is bound to be a period of suffering. One has to put up with that in a general manner. Until these people are put in their proper places, things will go on like this for a short time. I will set matters right.

MR. GHAZHIKKATTU JOSEPH (*Minachil* cum *Todupuzha*) : —ഇതു സംബന്ധിച്ചു് എന്തു തീരുമാനം പറയാൻ മന്ത്രിക്കുമോ?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: That is a very difficult question to answer.

MR. VARKALA K. MADHAVAN: May I know whether the Chief Engineer has punished any of the Executive Engineers for this kind of faulty work?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Yes.

MR. VARKALA K. MADHAVAN: May I know what the nature of such punishment is?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: Personal matters of this character are not open to discussion.

Ryots road from Adoor town to 2nd mile Thumpamon—Adoor road.

117. * MR. M K. NILAKANTAN: Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether they have received a mass petition from the inhabitants of Pannivizha, Adoor, Kunnathur, that the above road may be taken under departmental maintenance;

(*b*) if so, what steps have been taken thereunder;

(*c*) whether the acquisition work has been completed; and

(*d*) if not, what is the delay due to?

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DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Steps are being taken for the acquisition of the necessary land.

(*c*) In view of answer to part (*b*) this does not arise.

(*d*) Due to non-surrender of a portion of the lands required by the recalcitrant ryots and the non-execution of the works to be carried out by the ryots.

MR. P. K. KURIAKOSE: May I know whether fresh roads were taken by the department in the year 1121?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: No Sir.

MR. P. K. KURIAKOSE: May I know whether any fresh ryots roads were taken up by the department for repairs?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I have no information on that matter.

MR P. K. KURIAKOSE: May I know whether any road was taken up for repairs in the year 1120?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I claim notice.

MR M. K. MILAKANTAN: May I know whether the Assistant Engineers and Executive Engineers had submitted their estimates and whether they were sent back for being re-submitted?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: The statement of land required for acquisition in that instance was not accurate. Therefore the Executive Engineer was asked to send up revised proposals. It is learnt now that the matter is pending with the Tahsildar and the local Proverthicar. It is a matter to be settled in consultation with the Executive Engineer and the Sub-Engineers. In spite of seven reminders on the subject, nothing definite has turned yet.

MR. P. K. KURIAKOSE: May I know whether any ryots roads were taken up for repairs by the department since the honourable member took charge of the P. W. D.?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I do not remember now.

MR. P. K. KURIAKOSE: Sir, I want to know whether any ryots road was taken up for repairs as soon as the member took charge of the P. W. department?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I may just mention for the information of the honourable members of this House that quite a lot of them is being repaired and has been repaired. I may also remind to the honourable members of the request I made on the floor of the House regarding repairs to the ryots roads. I had invited the co-operation of every honourable member concerned with village roads as also the aid of the local people who could command the required labour. The Government also stated in that connection that in the matter of taking up village roads for repairs they would pay up the money in four instalments to that agency willing to execute the work. In response to that, half a dozen people actually

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[Dewan Bahadur L. Venkatakrishnan].

tendered and executed the work satisfactorily. To that extent those people are better off. Similarly if other people too had taken up the work in hand, most of the repairs relating to ryots roads could have been finished. On the other hand, if the work is to be done departmentally that would involve the appointment of a maistry or maistries on Rs. 20 or more as the case may be for carrying on such work. In such cases, the amounts sanctioned for maintenance work on those roads range from Rs. 20 to 25 a mile and this money would be swallowed up in establishment charges alone. It was entirely on account of such happenings, the system of repairs for village roads was changed. If anything has to be done by way of repairs to ryots roads, it is only in that manner. Such being the case I would once again ask for the co-operation of the honourable members of this House as well as the general public in this affair. If there is ready response, to this extent the grievances relating to roads could be redressed. It may be that there are certain roads which have not been repaired to the extent that ought to have been done or as much as could be done. All that is wanted could be seen through with the co-operation of the members of the Assembly and the public of the locality concerned.

RAO SAHIB A. K. BHASKAR (*Quilon* cum *Kottarakara*): May I know whether the subordinates of the Chief Engineer have not responded to the seven reminders?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: When their reply is officially received, action will be taken.

MR. P. M. VARGHESE (*Minachil* cum *Todupuzha*): May I know whether any ryots roads have been repaired in my constituency?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I claim notice.

MR. R. MADHAVAN NAIR (*Karunagapally* cum *Kartigapally*): Is it a fact that almost all the estimates sent up by the Executive Engineers are sent back for revision and recasting?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: It is perfectly possible that an estimate prepared may necessarily be capable of revision according to circumstances. Even 4 or 5 times that may have to be done according to conditions prevailing. For very relevant reasons estimates have been sent back for revision. I will just illustrate. Recently an estimate was sent up for approval for the construction of a wall for a tank. On checking it up I found that wall could not stand for 3 days. Well, I asked the officer who was responsible for such a plan. He replied that the Chief Engineer had signed an estimate and as such the Chief Engineer alone is responsible for such a state of affairs. On examining the estimate further I found the defects in levelling and surveying the place and in understanding the condition of the soil. The plan was found to be prepared on inadequate data. For these reasons the estimate once prepared was

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sent back for suitable revision. In such cases the department cannot help sending back the estimates. This is a case where the subordinates of the department have to be taught a lesson. In fact I am running a school and not supervising the works.

MR. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI *(Neyyattinkara* cum *Trivandrum)*: Sir, the honourable member was referring to response from the members. May I know what is the kind of response he expects from the members?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: For 8 to 9 months I received co-operation from members of the staff. For the last 3 or 4 months I have not been getting that co-operation from my subordinates. There is a kind of sabotage somewhere and the attitude is stiffening. I expect my professional brethren to implement my efforts by utilising the knowledge learnt by them in their honourable career.

MR. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: That is not my question. What is the kind of response he expects of the members of this Assembly?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: About 3 or 5 members have taken up the ryots roads by means of separate agencies. They have been able to give the work to their nominees and thus get their work finished satisfactorily. In the same way if some more members of this House had undertaken to complete the village roads, things would have gone on well.

RAO SAHIB A. K. BHASKAR: May I know why the honourable member does not get sufficient co-operation and response from his subordinates?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I am able to sit down and finish my work even at the cost of some extra time. Evidently my subordinates do not desire to do their work to that extent. Wherever surveying is needed, or levelling is required, I have to depend on my subordinates on that item of work. In such cases, such an officer has got to be made to do the work allotted to him.

MR. R. MADHAVAN NAIR: May I know how he can expect response from the members of his staff if the rates are not sufficient to carry out the work?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: It is unfortunate that such a kind of statement should emanate from that honourable member. In cases where the rates are found to be inadequate, Government would be only glad to enhance them. There is no necessity to suspect the intentions of Government in that matter.

MR. R. MADHAVAN NAIR: May I know whether the member is aware that Madhavan Nair himself has written a letter to the Chief Engineer intimating his willingness to take up the work referred to?

DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: It was only very recently such a response came from the honourable member and he had to be replied by return post—

MR. R. MADHAVAN NAIR: May I know what has happened to that letter?

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DEWAN BAHADUR L. VENKATAKRISHNAN: I issued the orders which honourable member well knows. I have not finally known the result yet.

PRESIDENT: We are now travelling very far from the question and the answer already furnished. But having now embarked upon the question of response of the honourable members as well as the response of the subordinates of the P. W. department, I think it is well I make one thing perfectly clear. I realise from the number of questions relating to the P. W. D. and the number of cut motions that have been received, that there is a general feeling that the public works should have been done more thoroughly and comprehensively than now. The position is this. In regard to village roads I made a statement that the policy of Government is to hand them over to local agencies as far as possible and I thought it could be done with the aid of demobilised personnel and with other persons who may be locally available. I found however that the rates quoted by the various persons who came up were almost fantastic. They were just as high as the demands of the demobilised person who was getting Rs. 200 in Tehran who said he would not enter any service unless he got the same pay. The rates that were available during military operations throughout the country are being now claimed. And I have directed the Chief Engineer that no rates of which he is not thoroughly satisfied should be accepted. Once you accept very extortionate rates it is very difficult to go below that afterwards. I have found that tendency very much in evidence during the last few months. There is a general tendency on the subordinates of the P. W. D. to take it for granted that, by resorting to non-co-operation and by petitioning to the head of the administration against the trespasses of the Chief Engineer, they can get away from him. As I told the honourable members, I have taken the trouble of getting Dewan Bahadur L. Venkatakrishnan as I have known him for the last 25 years. He is, to my mind, an honest man. About his technical abilities, it is generally regarded as of the highest class, in Madras. If he has failed it must be due to some reason which is not entirely due to him. But I find from the Executive Engineers downwards—and I may make this definite statement—that there has been a definite campaign of non-co-operation so far as the Chief Engineer is concerned and I have given him the fullest authority to deal with all persons who do not act in a disciplinary manner and who are in a mood of non-co-operation. Moreover, I have found and I am satisfied that the rates which are quoted by the Executive Engineers are such that they are not compatiable with honesty and I may say that if a trace of such a thing is found in any department there would be no hesitation on the part of the Government to get rid of everybody in that department and replace them by local men. I do not want to harm any man, but this kind of non-co-operation is now very much in evidence in the P. W. D. and in some other

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departments to which I shall refer when the time comes. There is carried on, as respects these departments, a kind of non-co-operation both inside and outside. If the present Chief Engineer does not do his work well it will be our duty to see that proper action is taken in the matter. But if there is any attempt to pit him on the part of the lower subordinates, they will be visited with condign punishment.

MR. T. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I may be permitted to say a word. I hear it stated that there is a compaign going on on the floor of this House in order to malign the honourable the Chief Engineer

PRESIDENT: Order, order. No, I am sorry to say the honourable member is perhaps still in the memory of his yesterday's speech; that is not the idea of what I said. There is a general tendency on the part of the subordinates to take it for granted that everything that goes wrong round them is due to the Chief Engineer. I do not hold a brief for Dewan Bahadur L. Venkatakrishnan. If honourable members can find out that he is guilty of laches or delay, it is their duty to say and to see to it that Dewan Bahadur L. Venkatakrishnan is dealt with in the way he deserves. But I find that a number of complaints have been made with the commission of which, I believe, many officers of the department are in touch, considering the exact nature of the complaints by the Executive Engineers and their subordinates throughout the State which reached us through indirect channels. I do not accuse the honourable members of this House. I would not accuse them, because this House is a House of correction. If the honourable official members go wrong, this House should point out that. But now I was referring to the state of indiscipline to which the complainants have gone. It is one thing for the Chief Engineer to go wrong. It is another thing for the assistant or the Executive Engineers to go about and ask people to talk to me about the way in which they have been badly treated, or the rudeness with which they have been treated. I found that those very persons were responsible for framing the charges. As a matter of fact, in one case when a contractor had quoted particular rates, he was asked to increase the rates by the departmental officers. Thus there is a deliberate kind of non-co-operation and, I think, if this is so, it will be resisted by the Government.

The tank in front of the M. M. Boys' School, Adoor.

118. * MR. M. K. NILAKANTAN: Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether they have taken any steps towards walling up (embanking) of the sides of the above tank, though the matter was agitated by me through, this Assembly for the last two years;

(*b*) whether the Chief Engineer has ever visited the place and submitted any report; and

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